The Genealogy of Jesus Christ
(Article)

This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram…

Matthew 1:1–3 (BSB)
See Appendix A for complete genealogy - Bible verses (v.4-16).

Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. He was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph…

Luke 3:23–24 (BSB)
See Appendix A for complete genealogy - Bible verses (v.23-38).

Introduction:

In the Bible there are different genealogies, primarily in the Old Testament, revealing a continuation of history and relationships within the society of the ancient world. (1) In the New Testament, following the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, there are no more biblical genealogies, apart from those about Jesus as the Messiah found in the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-17) and the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:23-38). (2) The following is an exploration of Jesus' genealogies (Matthew and Luke) as they relate to Old Testament genealogies, as they relate to each other (similarities and differences), what they have to say, including - looking at the people mentioned and the theological significance - especially, in how they point to Jesus Christ as Savior of the World.

In this part we are investigating how Jesus' genealogy relates to other genealogies in the Bible - what are the similarities and differences? In general, biblical genealogies do not only focus on biological descent, but serve as family register stressing specific occupations (Genesis 4:17-22), a table of nations (Genesis 10:1-32) with an emphasis on people groups, instead of individuals. (3) As the scope of Old Testament genealogies narrows, we find complete records of the ancestry of Jacob ('Israel') (Genesis

46:3-27; Exodus 6:14-27), a census patterned on genealogical relationships (Numbers 26:1-56), military organization (Numbers 1-3) and the family status of the Kings of Judah and Israel (books of Kings and Chronicles). (4)

Similar to the New Testament genealogies of Jesus, in the Old Testament, we find a descending genealogy - from parent to child (1 Chronicles 9:39-44) reminiscent of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus and an ascending genealogy - from child to parent (1 Chronicles 9:14-16) reminiscent of Luke's genealogy of Jesus. (5)

Likewise, the naming of a child is often related to specific circumstances (e.g. Isaac, Genesis 21:3, 6, Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:24-26, Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:9), at times expressing a blessing of the child's future (e.g. Jesus in Matthew 1:24). (6) In the book of Chronicles, we find the inclusion of foreigners and Hebrew women (1 Chronicles 4:17-19; 7:24) as indication to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant of blessing the nations (Genesis 12:1-3) (7) familiar to Matthew's genealogy in which he names five women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary). (8)

Lastly, with Luke's genealogy following a similar order to Old Testament biblical genealogies (Ezra 7:1-5) the uniqueness of Jesus' divine ancestry (being in Luke 1-2) is established. (9) One major difference between the Old Testament and New Testament, in terms of genealogies, is the notable absence of such lists, following Christ's genealogies in Matthew and Luke.

Matthew vs. Luke Contrasted:

Matthew's genealogy - following the Old Testament style of genealogies (see Genesis 5:1-32) - provides a selection of Jesus' ancestry, beginning with Abraham, while Luke provides a longer selection, beginning with Jesus, all the way back to Adam and finally to God. (10)

In this part we are looking at similarities and differences between Jesus' genealogies as they are recorded in Matthew and Luke. What are some of the challenges arising from contrasting the two?

In terms of similarities, we see that Jesus' genealogies present Him as rightful heir to King David's throne, as they trace Jesus to David (Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:31). (11) Also, there is agreement between Luke and Matthew with Old Testament genealogies, tracing the line from David to Abraham. (12) As such, there is historical accuracy here, which points to the integrity of the Bible, as well as to God's sovereignty and mercy - with history moving toward the coming Christ. (13)

When it comes to differences, as said, Matthew uses a descending genealogy (from parent to child), while Luke uses an ascending genealogy

(from child to parent). Matthew goes back to Abraham, Luke goes back to Adam. More challenging are the differences of specific names. With Matthew naming David twice (Matthew 1:17), revealing Solomon as David's son (Matthew 1:6) and naming Jacob as the father of Joseph (Matthew 1:16), this differs from Luke's genealogy in that here Nathan is revealed as David's son (Luke 3:31) and Eli ('Heli') is named as Joseph's father (Luke 3:23).

Different solutions have been proposed, and it is possible that Joseph may have been Eli's son-in-law, as found in Matthew's account. (14) The solution proposed that Matthew traces Jesus as David's descendent through Joseph, and Luke traces Jesus as David's descendent through Mary is less prominent today. (15) What complicates things is that the precise ancestral arrangement in Luke, when contrasted with Matthew is not certain - which makes an arrangement between both lists challenging, especially when it comes to Jesus' alleged grandfather. (16)

Among the most espoused and agreed upon suggestions is that Matthew's genealogy traces the *royal succession* line (from David to Solomon in Matthew 1:6), whereas Luke traces the actual *physical descent* of Joseph (from David to Nathan in Luke 3:31, with Nathan mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:14) with the convergence of both lives at Joseph. (17) This solution, if combined with the suggestion that either Luke or Matthew provides the legal descent, when the other provides the physical descent, is an attempt to harmonize the different names of Jesus' grandfathers, applying to levirate marriage laws (Deuteronomy 25:5). (18) However, other options are possible, especially relating to Joseph's grandfather ('Matthat' in Luke 3:24 and 'Matthan' in Matthew 1:15), depending on whether or not Matthat and Matthan are the same person. (19)

A Closer Look at Matthew's Genealogy:

In this part, we are looking at the people mentioned in Matthew's genealogy along with the theological significance. In the opening verse, Matthew reveals the purpose of his genealogy, which is to show that Jesus is the Messiah, revealed in David's royal lineage and rightful heir of all messianic promises, bringing divine blessings to all people who will ever believe in Him - hence the emphasis on King David (Matthew 1:6) and including, primarily, Gentile women. (20)

Jesus is the most important individual in Matthew's genealogy, identified as the Jewish Messiah, Israel's Savior - His name 'Jesus' (in Greek) derived from Hebrew "Joshua," reminiscent of Moses' successor in the Old Testament. (21) Writing to a primarily Judeo-Christian audience, Matthew emphasizes Abraham as father of the Jewish nation and King David as a

prototype of messianic king the Jewish people were expecting, culminating in revealing the identity of Jesus Christ. (22)

While there are many names not found in the Old Testament (i.e. “Abiud” to “Jacob”), Matthew includes the names of several women in His genealogy, that is Gentiles (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba) and Mary, a non-Gentile woman. (3) What unifies them is that they were all under suspicion for alleged illicit sexual relations (see Genesis 38; Joshua 2; Ruth 3; 2 Samuel 11) and Mary, who was initially under a similar stigma (Matthew 1:18-25). Notably, there is a direct link to Ruth in the Old Testament, where we discover an attempt at a complete interim genealogy from Judah to King David (Ruth 4:17-22). (24) This fact further underscores the authenticity of Matthew’s genealogy.

As we look at the structure of Matthew’s genealogy, we see that there is a specific arrangement of persons:

> In all, then, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.
>
> Matthew 1:17 (BSB)

This is significant, since there are omissions of people (‘gaps’) which adds to the differences between Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies. Considering Matthew 1:6-11 it is possible that Matthew may have used 1 Chronicles 3:10-14, since both omit specific people, in this case some of the kings mentioned in the Old Testament books (Kings and Chronicles). (25) God sovereignly works through Matthew, in leading Him to omit genealogical names, as we can see - the following table (comparing 1 Chronicles 3:10-12 to Matthew 1:8-9) (26):

Examples of Gaps In Genealogies	
1 Chronicles 3:10-12 and Matthew 1:8-9	
1 Chronicles 3:10-12	Matthew 1:8-9
Asa	Asa
Jehoshaphat	Jehoshaphat
Joram	Joram
Ahaziah (Uzziah)	Uzziah

Joash	----------
Amaziah	----------
Azariah	----------
Jotham	Jotham
Ahaz	Ahaz
Hezekiah (etc.)	Hezekiah (etc.)

This brings us back to the “fourteen generations” (Matthew 1:17) in which Matthew refers to “all the generations,” that is “all” referring to the people he included in his list, obviously omitting some - perhaps for symbolic symmetry or easier memorization. (27) It is possible, yet not conclusive, that Matthew uses a literary device and applies it to King David’s name (the three Hebrew letters of David’s name are: *dwd*) establishing the numerical value, equaling fourteen, to imply that Christ arrived in God’s perfect timing, thereby emphasizing divine intervention for the royal lineage of David. (28)

As for the theological significance of the people in Matthew’s genealogy, we see the fulfillment of God’s saving promises in Jesus Christ, which despite the omissions Matthew makes - could immediately speak to a Jewish person, at and around the time Matthew composed his Gospel, given the emphasis on Jesus as King David’s son and rightful heir to Messiahship. (29)

Also, Matthew connects both the Davidic and the Abrahamic covenant, as seen in Matthew 1:1. (30) The inclusion of women in the genealogy points to the Gentile mission, that the Gospel is for *both* Jew and Gentile alike (31) - a prominent theme, since God calls all people, especially outsiders (sinners, foreigners, outcasts) - that is effectively anyone who will respond to God’s salvation through Christ. (32)

Considering the people and theological significance in Luke’s genealogy, we recognize that not only is the listing sequence reversed, but also that Luke records Christ’s ancestry beyond Abraham, right back to the first person God created, that is Adam, who is referred to as “son of God” (Luke 3:38). (33) The inclusion of Adam is significant in that, he is the father of the entire human race, pointing back to God himself as Creator of all mankind, adding a universal flavour to Luke’s genealogy.

While many of the people named in Luke’s genealogy are found in the Old Testament (Genesis 5:1-32; 11:10-26 and 1 Chronicles 1-3), thirty-six names are not. (34) Following the people that can be identified in the Old Testament, we have Zerubbabel (Luke 3:27) administrator of Jerusalem after the exile in 538 BC, we have Nathan (Luke 3:31) who is king David’s third son, we have King David himself (Luke 3:31) alluding to Psalm 2:7 along with ancestral parallels in 1 Chronicles 1:34-2:15, we have Jesse (Luke 3:32) the

father of David providing a prophetic list to the future Messiah, “from the stump of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1) and we have Isaac, Jacob and Abraham (Luke 3:34) who, taken together, point to God’s covenant with Abraham. (35)

The theological significance of Luke’s genealogy can be found when we go right back to Adam, referred to as “the son of God” (Luke 3:38). He rebelled against God, showing himself to be faithless, resulting in the fall of mankind. This points back to Christ, who succeeded were Adam had failed - thereby becoming the greater Son of God, the “second Adam” and “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). (36) Thus, as God-Man, Jesus Christ, and His work on the cross has a universal aspect to it, since Luke emphasizes the human side of our Lord in his Gospel. (37)

The difference between Adam and Jesus is that the latter is conceived through the Holy Spirit, born sinless, thereby the only one who is able to atone for sins, providing salvation for believers. (38) The emphasis here is on Jesus’ divine sonship and the universal nature of His ministry (i.e. “Son of Man”) (39) that is Christ is our representative before God (40), which is the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Protoevangelium (Genesis 3:15) linking Christ with the seed of the woman (that is Eve). (41)

Conclusion:

In summary, we see that the genealogies of Jesus Christ when compared with one another have both similarities and differences, we realize that not only are they reconcilable, but also reveal God’s sovereign plan as He works through people in His providential rule to accomplish His ultimate goal. (42) In comparing the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, we see that in the latter Gospel, Luke places the genealogy following Jesus’ baptism and God’s confirmation of Christ as His Son, revealing Jesus’ identity and messianic status. (43)

While harmonizing the two gospels may be challenging - the best option being that Matthew reveals Jesus’ legal status to David’s throne through Joseph, whereas Luke provides Jesus’ physical descent through Mary - the agreement of Matthew and Luke far outweighs any differences, and shows the Holy Spirit at work in each of the gospel accounts. (44)

The inclusion of women in Matthew’s genealogy stands out, revealing that God works through both Jews and Gentiles alike, regardless of background or reputation. (45) Jesus being born of a virgin is a fulfillment of prophecy and emphasizes Christ’s divinity, as conceived by the Holy Spirit. (46) The prophetic nature inherent in the genealogies, for example the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1 reveals the Messiah as physical descendant of Jesse,

King David’s father (Luke3:32) pointing to the unique nature of Jesus Christ. (47)

Lastly, we see that Jesus’ ancestry is directly linked to God’s covenants with Israel, that is the Abrahamic covenant (“son of Abraham”) and the Davidic covenant (“son of David”), as revealed in the opening verse of Matthew. (48) Taken together, both genealogies provide irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of every person who will ever believe in Him and turn to Him with a heart of repentance. (49)

APPENDIX A

Matthew 1:1–17 (BSB)

1 This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. 4 Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. 5 Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. Next: David was the father of Solomon by Uriah’s wife, 7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. 8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. 9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. 12 After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the

father of Azor. 14 Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. 15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 17 In all, then, there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.

Luke 3:23–38 (BSB)

23 Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. He was regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of

Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

APPENDIX B

Other significant genealogies are found in:

Genesis 4:16-24; 5; 10; 11:10-32; 19:30-38; 22:20-24; 25:12-26; 36; 46:8-27

Exodus 6:14-25

Numbers 3; 26

Ruth 4:18-22

2 Samuel 3:2-5; 5:13-16

Ezra 7:1-5

Esther 2:5-6

Matthew 1:1-17

Luke 3:23-38

Notes

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May God bless you and keep you.

Pastor John

Amen.